



MARYLAND HEALTH CARE COMMISSION

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MHCC 10-008

VIRTUAL COMPARE©- AN INFORMATION ONLY WEB PORTAL FOR COMPARISON OF HEALTH BENEFITS AND COST FOR THE SMALL GROUP MARKET

QUESTIONS/RESPONSES

QUESTION

As one of the minimum requirements, the RFP states, "The contractor must have at least five years of experience generating health insurance information that details benefits, limitations, cost sharing, and premiums offered by multiple carriers." Does this requirement exclude offerors that have fewer than five years of experience, or offerors that do not have specific experience in "generating health insurance information that details benefits, limitations, cost sharing, and premiums offered by multiple carriers"?

RESPONSE

Yes.

QUESTION

Is Maryland taking other steps to position itself for an easy transition to the federal Connector legislation (e.g. individual AND small group subsidies)? How are you planning on utilizing the infrastructure from this project to accomplish that transition?

RESPONSE

We are sensitive to the discussions in Washington and considering options for optimal response. Virtual Compare will be utilized conceptually.

QUESTION

Is the funding of this capability only for the 2010 budget year or is it available through the contract duration? Are there other planned sources of revenue for the Maryland Health Insurance Partnership that are intended to fund the long-term operation of Virtual Compare?

RESPONSE

There is funding for maintenance and minor modifications after 2010. The operation of Virtual Compare is funded via agreement between the vendor and the carriers.

QUESTION

Please clarify the timing of when the application is expected to be in production? Date ranges seem to be dependent on “contract execution” and “work plan”. When is the work plan scheduled to be approved?

RESPONSE

The goal is to have Virtual Compare operational within 6 months of approval of the work Plan. The work plan will be approved as soon as it is deemed acceptable. Work can commence immediately after that.

QUESTION

Can you clarify other third party system or services providers who are already under contract to execute services under SB637 and the Maryland Health Insurance Partnership?

RESPONSE

We do not have contracts with any vendors related to SB637 or the Partnership at this time.

QUESTION

What is MHCC’s anticipated contract award date?

RESPONSE

February, 2010.

QUESTION

What is the State’s preferred process for requesting competitors’ bids under the Access to Public Records Act?

RESPONSE

Requestors of public information should follow the guidance from the Office of the Attorney General outlined here: <http://www.oag.state.md.us/Opengov/ChapterIV.pdf>

QUESTION

Part II of the RFP does not specify where in the Technical Proposal the requested information should be inserted. Please advise.

RESPONSE

Per the RFP - such functionality may be addressed in the submitted proposal but must be identified in bold as a value added service and identified as separately priced from the overall budget in the cost of the proposal.”

It would appear that a prudent person would comply with the RFP by placing such information in the section where it has applicability.

QUESTION

Item 4.9.4 requires that we name key personnel. If we are unable to determine key personnel within the timeframes of the procurement process, may we agree to the requirements of the position(s) and agree to allow MHCC final approval of personnel prior to hiring?

RESPONSE

No.

QUESTION

It is our understanding that we have permission to mark certain information confidential. What is MHCC's preference on how to mark confidential information?

RESPONSE

On a separate page(s) at the front of the technical proposal boldly marked "Confidential Material." Identify the section and provide rationale per the Attorney General PIA (Public Information Act) manual that gives guidance on the various exceptions to the PIA's disclosure requirement for public records, including exceptions for confidential commercial or financial information.

<http://www.oag.state.md.us/Opengov/ChapterIII.pdf>

QUESTION

Does the State consider a TPA license sufficient for licensing to conduct business in the state?

RESPONSE

The language does not preclude an out of state firm from successfully bidding, however, all vendors doing business with the state of Maryland must comply with all the requirements stated in the RFP.

QUESTION

This contract is labeled as a "Firm Fixed Price Contract". How flexible is the contract to accommodate add-ons and other functionality requirements mandated by Health Insurance Reform legislation? This would need to be addressed well before the go-live date currently slated for 2013. Please add some clarity to these potential provisions.

RESPONSE

The RFP is for an information only web portal. Should the functionality of Virtual Compare be usurped by federal reform, it will be addressed appropriately.

QUESTION

May we outline exceptions to the contract provided?

RESPONSE

Yes.

QUESTION

If we may outline exceptions to the contract, how would MHCC like to have those exceptions submitted?

RESPONSE

On a separate page(s), at the front of the technical proposal boldly headed "Exceptions." Please note that exceptions may result in a proposal being deemed non-responsive.

QUESTION

May we redline the contract provided?

RESPONSE

The format for indicating desired changes to the contract language is flexible but all proposed changes must be made on a separate page(s) at the front of the technical proposal boldly headed "Exceptions." Please note that exceptions to the contract in any format may result in a proposal being deemed non-responsive.

QUESTION

Would MHCC consider using our contract?

RESPONSE

No.

QUESTION

What is MHCC's interpretation of the cited law? What information does MHCC consider acceptable to mark confidential?

RESPONSE

On a separate page(s) at the front of the technical proposal boldly marked "Confidential Material." Identify the section and provide rationale per the Attorney General PIA (Public Information Act) manual that gives guidance on the various exceptions to the PIA's disclosure requirement for public records, including exceptions for confidential commercial or financial information.

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QUESTION

On page 38, section 20 Indemnity (Hold Harmless) Clause, under B. Indemnification of Contractors, it states: "The contractor shall indemnify and hold the State of Maryland harmless for any cost, expense, loss, liability, fine or penalty of any nature or character whatsoever that the State may incur as a result of the contractor or its subcontractor(s), to comply with the terms of this agreement ...".

RESPONSE

Such changes are not within the purview of the MHCC. This request for an exception requires Office of Budget Management approval.